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24 June 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Personnel

SUBJECT   :   Personnel Officer Trainee Program

1.   Initial OPAG concern about the POT program was voiced during
the 7 February 1974 meeting when new OPAG members expressed an interest
in interviewing some of the then current trainees to discuss their
views and to invite their opinions of the program.   Some of the present
OPAG membership went through the program and felt it could be made
more meaningful.

2.   On 27 February four members of the POT program attended the
OPAG meeting.   Candor was the word for the day.   Before opening the
meeting to a general discussion period, each trainee was asked to
briefly critique the training program as he saw it.   There was a
good deal of comment as to the strengths and weaknesses of the program.
The main points which emerged were:

   a.   The course was too long.

   b.   It would be beneficial to advise the trainee of his
        probable assignment as early in the program as possible.

   c.   General briefings given at the beginning of the program
        by senior OP officers were useful and constructive.

   d.   A general overall briefing on the CIA at the time of EOD
        would be helpful.

   e.   The IWA course would be more effective if given "a couple
        of months" after EOD.

   f.   Some of the training assignments were too detailed and
        appeared to be of a "make work" nature.

   g.   There was a lack of consistency as to who spends what
        amount of time in what office.

   h.   There did not seem to be a rationale to the training
        sequence.

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3. During subsequent OPAG meetings a number of ideas and topics related to the POT program were discussed. It was decided that more information on the history of the program, its relevancy and utility was needed. In order to evaluate the utility of the program, several senior and mid-level personnel officers were asked for their comments on the program and/or their evaluation of the trainees' preparedness in his first assignment. The Chief of the Staff Personnel Division has commented that as far as his part of the program is concerned, it is a real pain--it is too long for a briefing and too short for a training cycle. In our discussions with other personnel officers comments on the program were:

    a. Most first assignments are not really related to the training received. The nuts and bolts of the job are only learned after the trainee has started working.

    b. The only benefits of the program are the contacts and names the trainees pick up, and the knowledge of where to go for help.

    c. Interim assignments are of limited usefulness. The trainee doesn't receive any substantive work; he is given make-work type assignments.

    d. The saving factor for most trainees is their zeal and willingness to dig in and learn. First assignments should be jobs where they can learn the alphabet soup, learn to correct their mistakes.

    e. Familiarity with other M&S offices would be great.

    f. It is the supervisor's responsibility to develop the talents of the trainee.

The evolution of the program from an informal, unstructured program to its present form was covered in a briefing by the present CMO and during a discussion with the past CMO. A meeting with the Chairman of the Junior Panel served to answer several OPAG questions regarding the advanced planning of trainee assignments and identification of personnel for the POT program. From these meetings we were able to determine that it is perhaps a difference in philosophy which marks the distinction between the course as it is and as OPAG feels it should be.

4. The thrust of this paper is toward the scheduling of assignments, which brings us to the basic difference between OPAG and OP Panel philosophy. Currently, the Panel espouses a program designed to produce "personnel generalists" by providing training in central OP components followed by interim assignments of varying duration, usually in DDO components. More often than not, these interim assignments are

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interrupted by or turn out to be the trainee's first permanent assignment. While OPAG has no quarrel with a "generalist" philosophy, it does feel that a generalist can not be produced in a six-month training program. What can be done is to provide a basic grounding in the structure and philosophy of the Office of Personnel in CIA. The generalist personnel officer is a product of additional training, counseling and a variety of assignments. With a few exceptions, first assignments should be in a component personnel office. There are a number of jobs which have been identified by the Junior Panel as being suitable for "first assignments" (Attachment A). The frequency of rotation in and out of these jobs is easily monitored and advance scheduling of assignments for trainees in these jobs should be undertaken. The scheduling of assignments is burdensome, but it is not an unmanageable task.

5. In addition, it is OPAG's opinion that there should be a closer relationship between the latter, specific stages of training and the trainee's first assignment. While we recognize that the first part of the training must be general in nature and oriented towards the functions performed in the central OP components, the final stages of an employee's training should be geared to the specific unit to which the person will be assigned. This will require tailoring the program to meet the specific needs of the Directorate or Office of assignment. For example, a trainee who is to be assigned to the DDO might receive training not only in CPD, PAB and CPB, but also in Cover and Commercial Staff, the Office of Security and the Office of Medical Services. One who is to be assigned to an office in the DDI might receive more intensive training in SPD, an orientation briefing from the DDI Personnel Officer and a brief tour of some DDI personnel offices.

6. The revised program (Attachment B) as seen by OPAG would begin with a general orientation to the Agency and the Office of Personnel and its various functions. This general OP orientation would be procedurally much the same as the present one, but of shorter duration. Following the OP orientation and attendance of the IWA course, the trainee would receive tailored, specialized training. The training would depend on where the trainee is to be first assigned--it would be tailored to the needs of the component. For those who are hired to fill a specialized job or position in the central office of personnel, the final stage of training would be even more refined than for the majority who are destined to become generalists. Attachment C sets forth a planning curriculum for an assignment in the DDO, the DDI or a specialized OP component.

7. OPAG does not consider the ideas put forth in this paper as the ultimate solution--we must be prepared to shift our emphasis as the needs of those we serve change. We do feel that this offers new

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personnel careerists a chance to go to their first assignments with a better understanding of what will be expected of them and what resources are available to assist them.

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Chairwoman,
Office of Personnel
Advisory Group

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